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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/760,075	01/18/2004	Frederic Fortin	PUS-H002-001	1916

7590 07/17/2006
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SWITZERLAND

EXAMINER

WOODALL, NICHOLAS W

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
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3733

DATE MAILED: 07/17/2006

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary	Application No.	Applicant(s)	
	10/760,075	FORTIN ET AL.	
	Examiner	Art Unit	
	Nicholas Woodall	3733	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --
Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☐ Responsive to communication(s) filed on ____.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-12 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) ____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) ____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-10 and 12 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☒ Claim(s) 11 is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) ____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☒ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☒ The drawing(s) filed on 18 January 2004 is/are: a) ☒ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. ____.
 3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
- * See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. ____. |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152) |
| 3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date ____. | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: ____. |

DETAILED ACTION

Specification

1. Applicant is reminded of the proper language and format for an abstract of the disclosure.

The abstract should be in narrative form and generally limited to a single paragraph on a separate sheet within the range of 50 to 150 words. It is important that the abstract not exceed 150 words in length since the space provided for the abstract on the computer tape used by the printer is limited. The form and legal phraseology often used in patent claims, such as "means" and "said," should be avoided. The abstract should describe the disclosure sufficiently to assist readers in deciding whether there is a need for consulting the full patent text for details.

The language should be clear and concise and should not repeat information given in the title. It should avoid using phrases which can be implied, such as, "The disclosure concerns," "The disclosure defined by this invention," "The disclosure describes," etc.

2. The abstract of the disclosure is objected to because it uses a phrase that implies, such as "the invention concerns". Correction is required. See MPEP § 608.01(b).

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

3. The following is a quotation of the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall conclude with one or more claims particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming the subject matter which the applicant regards as his invention.

4. Claim 10 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention. The claim states, "Device for flexible intervertebral linking according to claim 1 characterized in that the diameter of the visco-elastic centering rings is adjusted freely in order to enable them to compress up to a stress threshold corresponding to the contact with the bore of the mean". This claim will be understood

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to read as the rings change diameters during compression from the forces input into the device.

5. Claim 11 recites the limitation "the eccentric orifice" in line 4 of the claim. There is insufficient antecedent basis for this limitation in the claim.

Double Patenting

6. A rejection based on double patenting of the "same invention" type finds its support in the language of 35 U.S.C. 101 which states that "whoever invents or discovers any new and useful process ... may obtain a patent therefor ..." (Emphasis added). Thus, the term "same invention," in this context, means an invention drawn to identical subject matter. See *Miller v. Eagle Mfg. Co.*, 151 U.S. 186 (1894); *In re Ockert*, 245 F.2d 467, 114 USPQ 330 (CCPA 1957); and *In re Vogel*, 422 F.2d 438, 164 USPQ 619 (CCPA 1970).

A statutory type (35 U.S.C. 101) double patenting rejection can be overcome by canceling or amending the conflicting claims so they are no longer coextensive in scope. The filing of a terminal disclaimer cannot overcome a double patenting rejection based upon 35 U.S.C. 101.

7. Claims 1, 2, 4-6, 9, 11, and 12 are provisionally rejected under 35 U.S.C. 101 as claiming the same invention as that of claims 1, 2, 4-6, 12-14 and 16-19 of copending Application No. 10/505469. This is a provisional double patenting rejection since the conflicting claims have not in fact been patented.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

8. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

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9. Claims 1-6, 8-10, and 12 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Navas (U.S. 5,375,823).

Regarding claim 1, Navas teaches an implant that comprises two sets of means. The first means is a mechanical structure comprised of rigid means. The second means is comprised of damping structures able to tolerate repetitive elastic distortions. The combination of the two means enabling the resistance and damp the mechanical stresses the device will be subjected to during use. Regarding claim 2, Navas teaches an implant characterized wherein the first set of means is a mechanical structure consisting of a rod with one end having a flange with a joining radius, such as a piston. The rod and flange are able to slide within the rigid structure that holds the damping structure as shown in Figure 1 below. Regarding claim 3, Navas teaches an implant characterized in that the mechanical structure has a cap equipped with a thread to connect the cap to the rigid structures. The rigid structures have a shoulder area that encloses the damping structures between itself and the piston as shown in Figure 1 below. Regarding claim 4, Navas teaches an implant characterized in that the mechanical structure means consists of two hollow cylinders as shown in Figure 2 below. One of the cylinders is tapped to allow a rod with a threaded tip to be fastened to the cylinder. Regarding claim 5, Navas teaches an implant characterized in that the damping structures are a centering ring that permits the piston to glide in the center hole of the ring and a disk as shown in Figure 2 below. Regarding claim 6, Navas teaches an implant wherein the mechanical structures rigid means contain the damping structures and protect them from the environment of the human body (column 3 lines 29-35).

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Regarding claim 8, Navas teaches an implant characterized in that the mechanical structure means is equipped with a thread and comprises a cap with an orifice that is designed to fit the diameter of the guiding rod of the piston as shown below in Figure 2.

Regarding claim 9, Navas teaches an implant wherein the structural means has a bore enabling guidance without excessive friction of the piston within the rigid means (column 2 lines 13-20). Regarding claim 10, Navas teaches an implant characterized in that the damping means have diameters that change in order to allow them to compress when the piston is displaced due to a stress input into the device (column 2 lines 21-48).

Regarding claim 12, Navas teaches an implant wherein the structural means consist of rigid means in which one of the rigid means contains an orifice that limits or prevents the clearance of the piston to allow the implant to operate in the desired directions.

Navas fails to teach that the device is manufactured from biocompatible materials. It would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to manufacture the device of Navas from biocompatible materials, since it has been held to be within the general skill of a worker in the art to select a known material on the basis of its suitability for the intended use as a matter of obvious design choice. In re Leshin, 125 USPQ 416.

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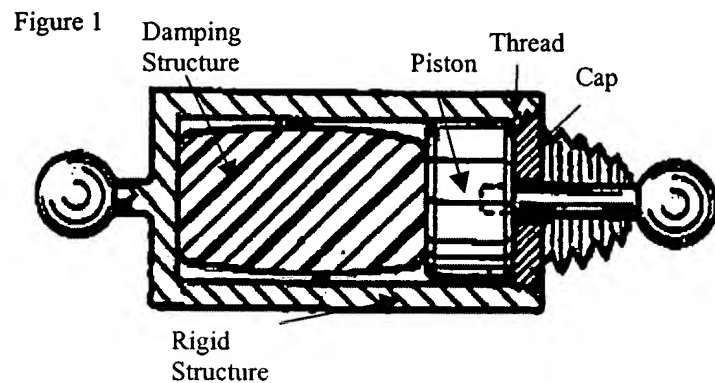
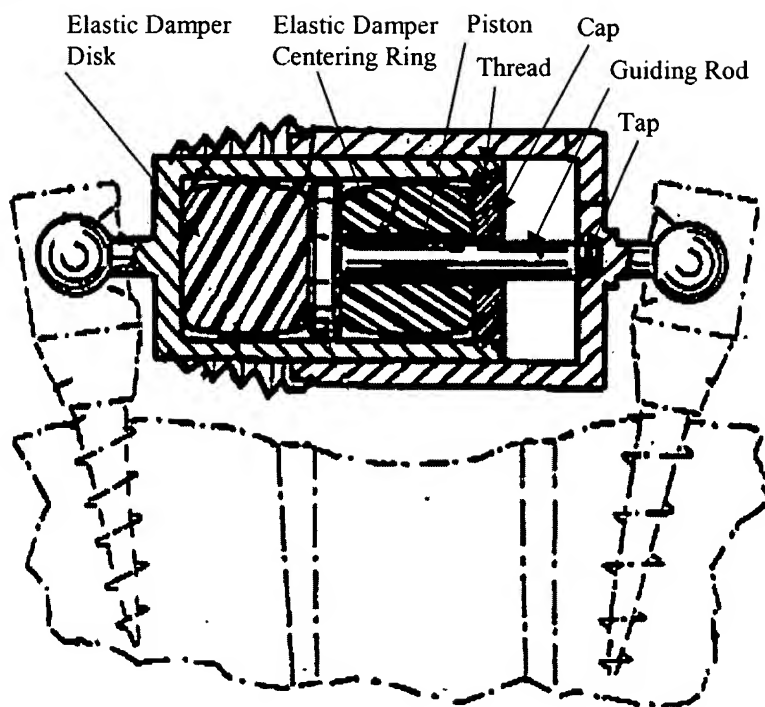


Figure 2



Allowable Subject Matter

10. Claim 11 is objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Conclusion


11. The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure. See PTO-892 for cited references the examiner felt were relevant to the application.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Nicholas Woodall whose telephone number is 571-272-5204. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday to Friday 8:00 to 5:30 EST..

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Eduardo Robert can be reached on 571-272-4719. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

NWW


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